



"The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time."  
—Abraham Lincoln

16-Oct-15

## *Snapshots (Part One)*

Some time back, The Weather Channel website featured the creative works of [Shawn Reeder](#), a man who bills himself as a visual artist. Among Reeder's specialties is time-lapse cinematography, and his favorite subject matter is the combination of landscapes, weather patterns, and the heavens over a period of time. One five-minute movie, consisting of over 100,000 individual pictures of various landscape sequences, took more than two years to shoot and compile.

Through such sequential pictures at set intervals of time, and slight variations in the location of the camera, he has captured stunning events in God's creation. Through his work in places like Yosemite National Park and New Zealand, he visually chronicles the beauty of natural events, such as morning sunlight chasing shadows down a canyon wall. He captures the interplay of storm clouds and stabbing rays of light over a lake, and the wheeling of the Milky Way above an expanse of desert. With his time-lapse photography, he allows us to witness fog rolling in, just like a wave of water.

Many such natural events are taking place constantly, yet for the most part, we are oblivious to the changes over time because our minds do not operate like one of these cameras. It takes something outside of our natural abilities to keep track of the variations and progression of the natural world through time. We are not equipped to capture how light, shadow, and weather patterns change throughout the day. Instead, we only capture a snapshot, a moment, that may be intense while we are in it but which usually fades almost immediately.

This effect has a parallel in our walk with [God](#). We probably remember our calling, our

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[baptism](#), and the opening of our spiritual insight. At the other end, we can read the conclusion of the Book and catch a glimpse of where we will end up if we hold to the right course. But we are not equipped to see each change in us as it happens. We often lose sight of the broad sweep of what God is doing with us and for us. It is easy enough to take a snapshot of where we are now, of our circumstances, and of how things look from our present perspective, but we do not always have the capacity to see how that snapshot fits into the overall record of God's work in our lives, let alone what the future holds.

Sometimes a snapshot of our lives is particularly dismal and seemingly hopeless. Just as any number of the 100,000 individual pictures in that five-minute film could be ordinary, uninspiring, or even depressing, so also we might be focusing on a snapshot of our lives that is not what we would like to see, either in terms of spiritual growth or physical circumstance. Yet, a single picture misses the broad sweep of both history and what lies ahead. It cannot tell us with any accuracy what will happen down the road. The fantastic work that God is doing with us is undiscernible through a snapshot—there is simply too much in the past and in the future that we cannot see.

In his epistle to the Philippians, the apostle Paul begins with an encouraging reminder:

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every [prayer](#) of mine making request for you all with [joy](#), for your [fellowship](#) in [the gospel](#) from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that *He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of [Jesus Christ](#)*. . . . ([Philippians 1:3-6](#); emphasis ours)

The meaning of verse 6 places our initial snapshots, not at the beginning of our lives, but all the way back to the first chapter of Genesis, where God declares what He is doing. In [Genesis 1:26](#), [Elohim](#) said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. . . ." When man was created, his physical body had the same general form as God's spirit body, but he was far from complete. This verse has not yet been fulfilled.

Together, these verses are talking about our destiny of becoming full, spirit-composed, and glorified members in the Family of God. The work of the Creator is continuing, and it will keep going until man is in the [image of God](#) in the fullest sense.

Notice that Paul begins his [letter to the Philippians](#) with a statement of his steadfast confidence that *God will complete* the spiritual work that He has begun in His called-out ones. In [John 5:17](#), Jesus declares that His Father has been working until now, and He

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is also working. We easily lose sight of this work, because our primary senses are physical, and God's spiritual work cannot be detected or measured with such crude instruments. We need reminders like these that God is fulfilling a divine purpose, completing His good work, even as our moment-to-moment—or snapshot-to-snapshot—lives may not make this immediately obvious.

Occasionally, we do receive a clear glimpse of His spiritual work in our lives or in the lives of those close to us, but it is nearly impossible for us to hold onto that snapshot and compare it with the next. Because we are restricted to these infrequent glimpses of God, it is easy for His divine project to slip from our minds. So Paul reminds us of it because it is crucial that it remain our spiritual focus. Just as the individual pictures in a time-lapse sequence only tell a fraction of the story, so these snapshots that we take are inadequate to provide us a full understanding of what is taking place.

It is imperative that we remember that a Master Artist is at work. We cannot fully comprehend the work that He is doing, since we cannot fully comprehend *Him*—yet we can share in Paul's solid assurance that He who has begun a good work in us *will* complete it. Even if our current snapshot is the worst picture we have ever seen, we must remember that that is all it is—a snapshot. It does not tell us what comes next. The project is not yet complete, but the Creator is always overseeing it and advancing it in humanly unfathomable ways.

- David C. Grabbe

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## *World News Highlights*

### [Steep Rise in Immigrant 'witchcraft' and 'exorcism' Related Child Abuse](#)

Breitbart.com 11-Oct-15

### [No Whites Allowed: Seattle 'yoga Class for People of Color' Excludes Caucasians](#)

Infowars.com 09-Oct-15

### [Isis Cuts off Ears of Citizens of Mosul for Cursing Islamic State](#)

ClarionProject.org 11-Oct-15

### [Chinese Media: Military Must Be Ready to Counter Us in South China Sea](#)

The Guardian 15-Oct-15

### [Campbell's Soup Comes Out of the Closet: Ad Features Gay Dads Feeding Child](#)

Infowars.com 13-Oct-15

[Is Barack Obama Actually Trying to Start World War Iii?](#)

The Economic Collapse Blog 12-Oct-15

[Sanctuary Cities Releasing 1,000 Criminal Aliens Per Month](#)

Breitbart.com 08-Oct-15

[Sweden: 'no Apartments, No Jobs, No Shopping Without a Gun'](#)

Gatestone Institute 03-Oct-15

[\\$3,248,723,000,000: Federal Taxes Set Record in Fy 2015](#)

CNSNews 15-Oct-15

[Putin Derides 'weak' U.s. Policy as Diplomats Discuss Syria](#)

Bloomberg.com 15-Oct-15

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## *Church News & Special Announcements*

If you missed the performance of the 2015 Feast of Tabernacles Children's Choir in Nashville, Tennessee—orwould just like to experience it all over again—pleasewatch the following video. Enjoy!

14-Oct-15

Church of the Great God is pleased to announce the baptisms of three new members: brother and sister **Jacob** and **Summer Hinds** of Fort Mill, South Carolina, and **Taylor Wright Ouzts** of Columbia, South Carolina. The baptisms took place on Sunday, October 4, 2015, at the Embassy Suites in Nashville, Tennessee, during the Feast of Tabernacles. The baptism was officiated by **John Ritenbaugh**, **Richard Ritenbaugh**, **Martin Collins**, **John Reid**, and **Mark Schindler**. Congratulations and welcome, ladies and gentleman!

12-Oct-15

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## *New Transcripts*

[1228: Ecclesiastes Resumed \(Part Nineteen\)](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 23-Aug-14

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## *Prayer Requests*

New prayer request updates have been posted for the following people:

[Carol Althouse](#)

[Roy Holladay](#)

[Geoff Neilson](#)

[Luigi Vaghi](#)

[Gareth Wyatt-Mair](#)

[Gareth Wyatt-Mair](#)

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## *From the Archives: Featured Sermon*

### [Judgments: Past, Present, and Future](#)

by Clyde Finklea

Clyde Finklea, reminding us that the Son of God has been given all judgment, assures us that God's called out ones will be covered by grace, blotting out all sins. We have to have faith and trust in God that we have been moved from the book of death to the book of life. He who has been called, given ears to hear, having faith in God, has access to the book of life. In order to avoid being judged, we need to examine ourselves, measuring ourselves against the qualities in the love chapter. Judging ourselves will soften the judgment of God, when we indeed appear the judgment seat of Christ, a venue where our works will be examined. We should look at our own works and not those of others, but we should render charity to our brethren. We have passed through the judgment that was (the forgiveness of our sins), the judgment that is (our self examination) and judgment to come (Christ bringing our reward).

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## *From the Archives: Featured Article*

### [Make Every Day Count](#)

by Mike Ford

Time is perhaps our most precious commodity, and once it passes, it is lost forever. Even so, we tend to waste it at a profligate rate. With the tragic story of the Donner Party's journey to California as a background, Mike Ford encourages us make wise use of the time we have left because it is inexorably running out.

## *Featured Audio Schedule*

### **Daily Audio Programs**

Hear previous sermons, sermonettes, and Feast of Tabernacles messages, **Sunday through Friday**. [Available from the homepage](#).

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>
Sunday 18-Oct-15	Who the Two Witnesses Are NOT
Monday 19-Oct-15	Psalms: Book One (Part Four)
Tuesday 20-Oct-15	The Book of Daniel (Part Eight)
Wednesday 21-Oct-15	Life Doesn't Work on a Balance Sheet
Thursday 22-Oct-15	With Hands Raised
Friday 23-Oct-15	The Preservation Of Wealth

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